

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. Of Health Shuts Down Wendy's After Finding Rats, Rat Droppings In Ketchup Boxes, Cockroaches And More

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ST. CROIX -- The Virgin Islands Department of Health on Monday shuttered Wendy's, above, located in Sunny Isle, after a D.O.H. inspector found the restaurant to be in violation of multiple local laws pertaining to sanitation.

That's according to D.O.H. Director of Public Relations, Nykole Tyson, speaking with The Consortium this afternoon.

Ms. Tyson said D.O.H. received a complaint on Monday by a concerned resident, who had visited the facility Sunday night, and stated that large rats were inside and outside of Wendy's.

During the inspection, which began at about noon on Tuesday, the inspector encountered rat droppings inside ketchup boxes and in a storage area, according to Ms. Tyson. The inspector also found cockroaches in the establishment, including in a food machine, and also crawling on walls.

The inspector immediately issued a cease and desist document directed to the local franchise owners of Wendy's, an American international fast food restaurant chain founded by Dave Thomas on November 15, 1969, in Columbus, Ohio. The inspector also issued a citation for closure of the facility until the violations were rectified.

Citing Virgin Islands Code, Ms. Tyson noted one of the violations as Abatement of Nuisance. She said the inspector found that employees would open the restaurant without cleaning it, leaving rat droppings visible. The inspector also found that a strong urine odor engulfed the dining area.

The second violation was Unsanitary Conditions, as the inspector found that Wendy's kitchen floor had grease buildup, and the kitchen walls were unsanitary. The inspector also found mold buildup behind an ice machine and trash was found on the floor in the storage area.

Ms. Tyson said the third violation was Accumulation Prohibited, as the inspector found that Wendy's, overall, was kept in an unsanitary manner, and employees would ignore trash visible on the floor. The fourth violation deals with insects and pests, as the inspector found rats and rat droppings inside Wendy's, in boxes of ketchup and on the kitchen floor.

"The citation was given on the spot," Ms. Tyson said. "They were ordered to close the establishment until all violations were rectified."

Correction: Wednesday, October 5, 2016

A previous version of this story, because of a text error, stated that the Department of Health inspection occurred on Monday. That's incorrect. The complainant reported the unsanitary conditions at Wendy's on Monday, and D.O.H. inspected and shuttered the facility on Tuesday. The story has been updated to reflect the correct information.